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ABSTRACT

The document offers guidelines for conducting an inservice program for parents of gifted students. Initial sections describe the inservice model, list activities on identification of the gifted, and present information on emotional consequences of giftedness. Following sections address key points from other presentations, the workshop agenda, and procedures for writing a speech. A sample parent questionnaire is included as are the text of a speech given to parents by a parent, a list of questions and concerns raised by parents during inservice meetings, biographical information on two children, and a parent bibliography. Appendixes include question and answer sheets containing information on such topics as parents of the gifted and talented, characteristics of the gifted and talented, and funding for gifted programs. (SBH)

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Parenting the Gifted: An Inservice Model

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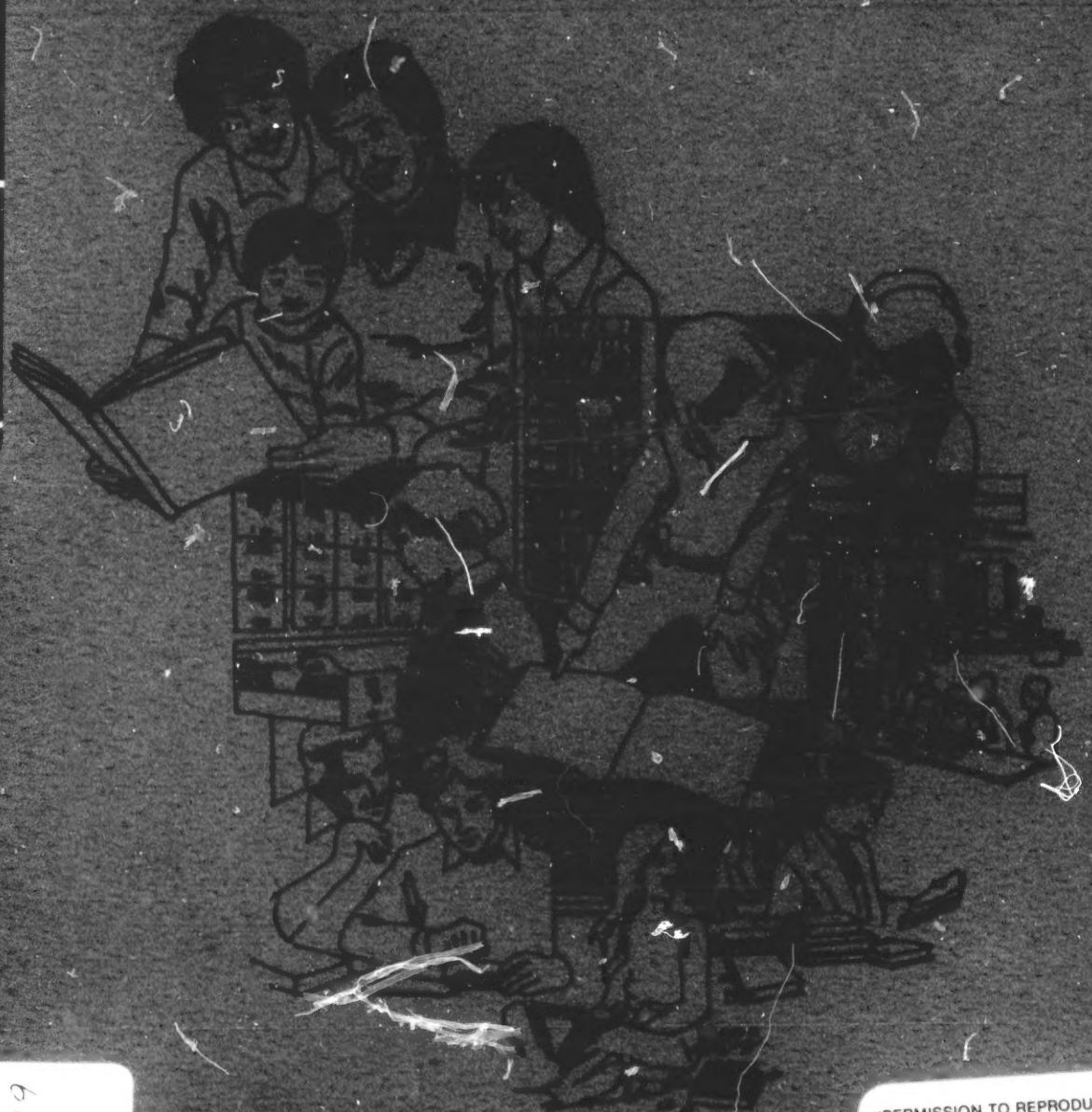

Ella Mae Gogel
Janet McCluskey

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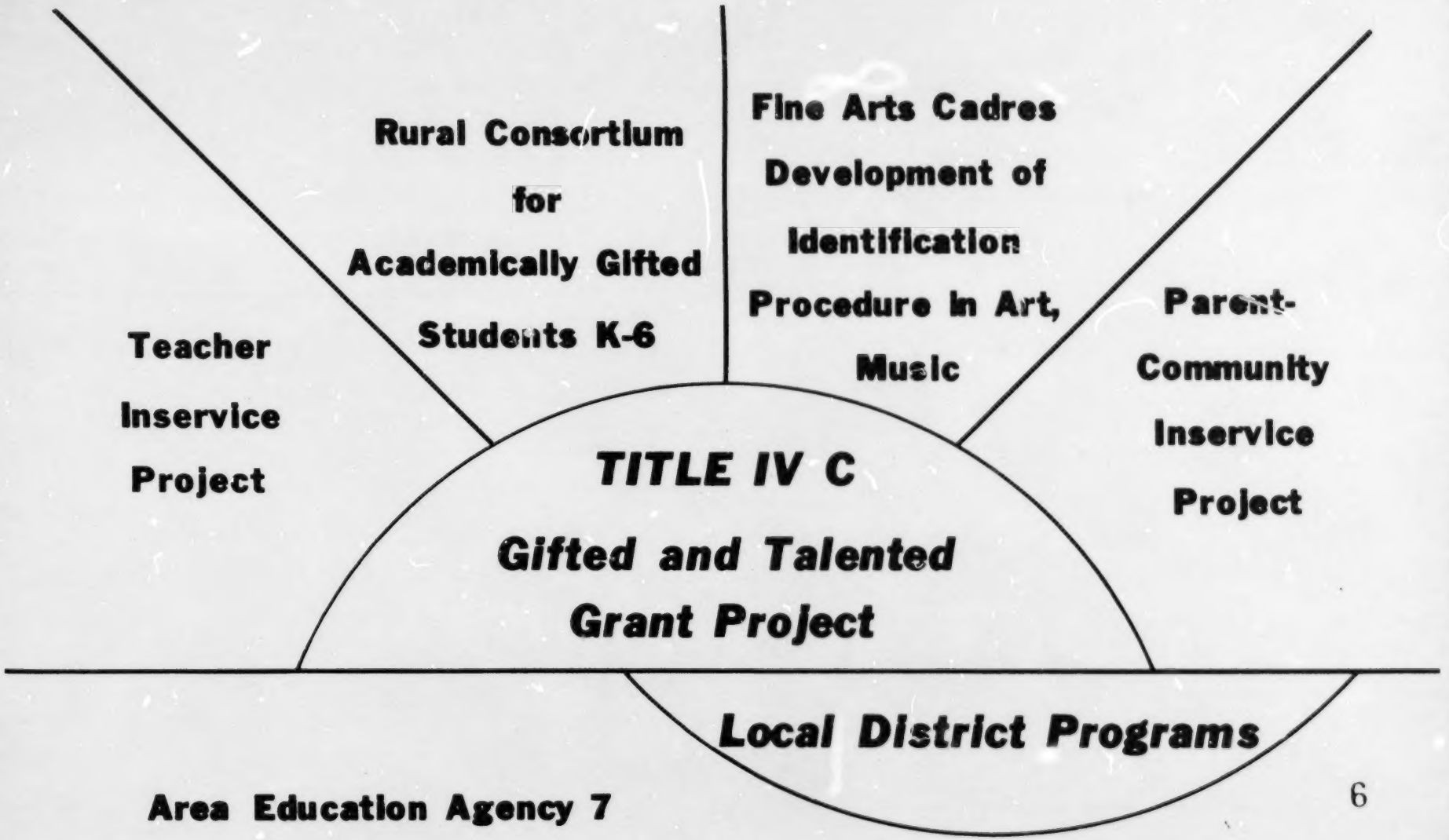
Ella Mae Gogel - Ella Mae, Cedar Falls, is National Chairperson of the parents committee of the Talented & Gifted Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, current secretary of Iowa Talented & Gifted, President of the board of directors of Area Education Agency 7, past-president and founder of the Friends [illegible]HKE/ KUNI, member of the advisory board of National Public [illegible]dio's weekly program Options in Education, consultant on radio development to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, one of 14 members of the Radio Advisory Service to the 231 National Public Radio member stations, President of the Iowa Council of Area Education Agencies, and a board member of the Iowa Association for children with Learning Disabilities, member of the development committee for the board of VOLUNTEER, The National Center for Citizens Involvement and a frequent speaker in the Midwest. Ella Mae is the mother of three sons and three daughters, and likes to swim, bike, collect and read books.

Janet McCumsey - Janet McCumsey is a Consultant for Gifted and Talented education in Area Education Agency 7 in Cedar Falls serving 21 public and non-public school districts. She is the Coordinator of the Learning Lodge (rural consortium) Programs in Denver and Independence as well as a Title IV-C teacher inservice project. Other involvements include an inservice packet to accompany the award winning film "Children of Promise," a filmstrip/ tape production "Hey, What About You?" for peer self nomination, content ideas for gifted students, as well as response to inservice requests in all aspects of program development. She is a member of ITAG, CEC/TAG, NAGC, PPK, Delta Kappa Gamma and the research forum for talented and gifted education in Iowa. Her previous educational experiences were in the Fort Dodge Community Schools and Malcolm Price Laboratory School at the University of Northern Iowa. Janet is the mother of two sons.


Rural Consortium for Academically Gifted Students K-6
Fine Arts Cadres Development of Identification Procedure in Art, Music
Teacher Inservice Project
Parent-Community Inservice Project
TITLE IV C
Gifted and Talented
Grant Project
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Area Education Agency 7

North Sector Schools

Gifted and Talented

Parenting the Gifted: An Inservice Model

Janet McCumsey

> "There is a need for parents to be very self aware regarding their personal investments in the child and also to maintain an accurate and balancing perception of the child as a total and growing person. Gifted and creative children need parents for emotional support and encouragement, for value and behavioral guidance and to set realistic limits; it is appropriate and important that parents of gifted and creative children in fact do fulfill a parenting "contract" with their children." (Fine, Gifted Child Quarterly, Winter 1977, p. 498)

As a consultant for Gifted education for an Area Education Agency, I am in the position to work with both schools and parents. However, all requests for service to schools is top priority with parent involvement voluntary and available as it fits in with regular scheduling. Because my position dictates that I am an educational advocate first, I sometimes find it difficult to adequately meet the needs of many parent requests to the degree of satisfaction which they are seeking.

A parent inservice model has been developed as part of the objectives for a second year involvement in a Title IV-C Gifted and Talented Grant Project. The twenty-one public and non-public school districts participating are located in twenty-five different towns or cities. These towns were clustered into seven central locations, convenient for parents to attend a series of four inservice sessions during the school year. As consultant to these schools, I host all sessions, often delivering the presentations. All groups heard the first three topics listed below. A fourth presentation was selected from the other titles or were given by guest speakers.

"Who Are The Gifted? How Are They Identified? - Janet McCumsey

"Some Things Parents Can Do To Help Their Gifted Children" - Ella Mae Gogel

"The Emotional Consequences of Giftedness" - Dr. Rick Jennings, Child Psychologist

"Ideas For The Gifted Child At Home"

"How To Live With The Gifted Child"

"Local School TAG Program"

"Becoming An Advocate For The Gifted"

Guest speakers included Thelma Epley, Linda Addison, Rita Dunn, and Ruth Blome.

The schools took turns hosting the meetings as well as publicizing them. Teachers in the inservice project worked with their administrators to notify parents in all districts in their cluster when it was their turn. These teachers and administrators also attended the meetings to meet with parents, etc. After the first meeting parents invited other parents to attend the sessions. Many parents admitted that they felt their very appearance at such a meeting would be mistaken for being elitist in some way.

Parents were encouraged at each meeting to ask questions, state concerns and to check out a variety of materials to read at their leisure. Additionally, many materials were reprinted for them to keep. Support for legislative funding for gifted programs was encouraged along with legislative progress reports at each meeting. Many parents began taking an active role in contacting their legislator. Membership in the Area TAG 7 organization was also encouraged as was state ITAG. Information about the

Iowa State Talented and Gifted Conference was widely distributed. Parents were also invited to any inservice sessions on talented and gifted held within our area. Many of these parents were in attendance.

Thirty-three parents from these districts volunteered to be matched with the teachers in the inservice project to complete the Junior Great Books training course. These teams lead and coordinate the Great Books discussion groups in their local districts. Enthusiasm for this program has been so high that a third Great Books training session was held to accomodate additional parent volunteers from these schools. This has been the first positive step toward parent involvement in school programs in many of these schools.

As part of the activities to meet the objectives a questionnaire was developed to gather information which could be supportive in educational planning. Behavior in parenting that supports and encourages gifted children to be productive were of special concern. Likewise, question number 9 is an attempt to look at the characteristics Gallagher lists as necessary in a teacher of the gifted to see if they are predominant in parents. It is hoped that some conclusions may be drawn about behaviors of parents that elicit productive behavior and maybe should be present in the teacher of the gifted. Because so many Iowa schools feel the answer to a gifted program is hiring a teacher, selection of that teacher should be given top priority to insure employment of the best candidate.

An evaluation of each of the components will be compiled and reported to the school administors. A log of all activities is also kept. Follow up will also be planned as part of the project's continued re-evaluation efforts to set long and short term goals for implementing local district programs for the gifted and talented.

"Who Are The Gifted?

How Are They Identified?"

Establish definition of giftedness.

Use media for involvement such as Radar's Simulation on Identification or Children of Promise.

Relate examples of children gifted in a variety of talent areas - case studies. Discuss range of giftedness - what percent? Dispel stereotypes and myths - learn to deal positively with them.

Give attention to the type of press coverage given gifted - how often related to IQ?

Review multiple criteria used for identification.

Show how identification is congruent to program plans.

Tell about a few program options that might be available or appropriate.

Demonstrate how community response is important for the support of gifted programs.

Discuss parents role in the identification process- importance of biography.

Relate the importance of observing the learning process within their child - who knows better and can help the school?

How is the child motivated at home? Is it the same for school?

Read, learn about giftedness, talk to other parents.

Role play classic problems that happen at home.

Become an advocate for school programs.

"The Emotional Consequences of Giftedness"

There is a higher instance of emotional problems with highly creative or intellectual children.

Historically intellectual giftedness was linked with mental illness - later found that there was no relationship. Studies from the 1960's on, show positive relationships between intellectual and personal attributes.

Gifted and talented children are more similar to other children than different. It is easy to regard giftedness as being different.

Emotional consequences of giftedness relate directly to the response to that giftedness.

child ⟷ environment

The very interaction between the gifted child and how he/she responds to the environment or how the environment responds to the gifted child may make it more difficult for the gifted child to get his/her emotional needs met.

Characteristics exhibited in giftedness which are viewed as desirable are also often found undesirable, troublesome or threatening.

Teachers will discipline the gifted child more severely because they "should know better."

Parents who never experienced "kidship" make lousy parents.

Gifted children can be victims of unrealistic expectations.

Social perceptions and understandings are advanced in many - good at knowing who friends are.

Can be negative side effects - Is it always an advantage to be the one who is excelling or achieving?

There is a range of giftedness. Kids should have some choice in decision making, whether they want to exercise their giftedness.

Emotional openness in our society - tell me anything and everything, but not what I don't want to hear.

Idea people - alone
"Someone with new ideas is initially alone" (Torrance)

We verbally flatter those with ideas, but often reject their ideas

Love me, love my giftedness. Withdrawal of giftedness can be used to punish.

In adolescence the need to be accepted is so great that being different is even more difficult.

What do we do? Let kids do some giving - adults don't let kids give to them. They are too busy asking, "what can we do for them?"

Key Points From Other Presentations

Gifted/talented kids love science.

We should tell kids what struggles come before a masterpiece was completed. Tell them how difficult it is to accomplish something.

Give mental assignments to the gifted, they get snowed with paper work.

They need depth perception. Give them the longest range view possible - see as far as the eye can go.

Give them a lifeline - every innovator on the fringe of knowledge needs lifeline - will look back to person who supported them.

Three factors in productive individual above average:

- creativity
- personality variables - do kids have hang ups that interfere with persistence
- past frustration - from I can't, to I'll try.

There is a tendency to raise expectations too high - over schedule

Must meet other gifted kids early

T.V. takes away the ability to make images. Encourage nental visual images.

Pre-school - K - 1st - worst time to be gifted - don't know what's wrong with them.

Some children who read before school are not gifted - highly teachable - good mimics.

Expose the gifted child to the best scholar in the area.

Giftedness is in the response.

We move ourselves along when we come upon a road block.

Help the gifted child get over frustrations - they can't do everything well.

Each characteristic of giftedness carries a problem with it. Giftedness can be a burden.

Share their high sensitivity - they need support and love.

Share your passion for life - you cannot be an example to a very perceptive child if you just exist.

Try caring conversation.

Until you set a personal cruising pace you cannot help the gifted child set his cruising pace.

Don't think in small dimensions for anyone.

Never discount the mean kid - he can be a born leader.

A characteristic of highly gifted people is a tolerance for confusion and junk. (He may solve the energy problem but can't find his pencil.)

Teach your gifted child how to fail.

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Parent Questionnaire

1. At what age was your child when you first suspected he/she was gifted and talented? Please check.

_____ 0-6 months
_____ 6-12 months
_____ 1-2 years
_____ 2-3 years
_____ 4-5 years
_____ Later

2. What events caused you to suspect giftedness?

3. How did you meet the need of the child in regard to his/her giftedness?

4. How was giftedness verified?

5. Is there someone who is particularly supportive or understanding of the child?

_____ Yes _____ No

Name relationship (could be more than one)

_____

_____

6. Describe in one word the interaction between the gifted child and each of the other family members listed.

Mother _____

Father _____

Sister(s) _____

Brother(s) _____

Grandparents _____

For example: supportive, competitive, antagonistic, friendly, non-applicable

7. List ways that you work with your child and that are successful.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Check the following characteristics that you feel apply to you as a parent.

_____ 1. Good health and physical superiority.

_____ 2. Variety of interests.

_____ 3. Creative and original.

_____ 4. Able to explain things well.

_____ 5. Participate in community activities.

_____ 6. Clear and consistent philosophy of child rearing.

_____ 7. Love of learning.

_____ 8. Excellent sense of humor.

_____ 9. Abundant physical energy

9. What effective procedures have you used to have the school properly facilitate your child's learning? (Explain in detail. Who did you talk to? How persistent did you have to be? What measures did you use if you met resistance?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. If you could have one wish as a parent of a gifted child, what would it be?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DEVELOPING A SPEECH FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Gifted & Talented Workshop

Agenda

9:30 - 10:00	Coffee
	Opening Remarks
10:00 - 12:00	Four One-half Hour Sessions
	1) Identification Nature and Needs of Gifted
	2) Legislative Needs and An Historical Perspective
	3) The Parents Role
	4) Program Prototypes
12:00 - 12:30	How To Write A Speech
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch
1:15 - 3:00	Writing Time
3:00 - 4:00	Small Groups: Try Your Speech On One Another

How To Write A Speech

(Your speech should be about 10 minutes in length - no longer than 20 minutes.)

Use the 3 T's in writing a speech:

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them,
2. Tell them,
3. Tell them what you said. In other words, tell them 3 times.

The 1st T:

I. In a sentence, make a statement of content, an opinion, a thesis, a statement of purpose. What message do you want to give them, the intent of the talk? Have a good provocative example of a gifted student. Use a local, personal example if possible.

In the introduction of your speech use provocative examples, "Are you aware that we have children in our schools with gifts and talents that are not being challenged? In Iowa, one of every five high school dropouts is gifted. Give anonymous examples. Give some idea of the numbers of students you are talking about.

Make a statement: "Our Iowa TAG organization believes that the schools are not providing adequate programs for gifted students. Many gifted students are not now being identified because there are no programs for them."

Every good speech sets its thesis out early.

The 2nd T:

II. Develop the body of the speech.

Keep your audience in mind. Determine how well informed your audience is. Do they have children in school? Are they in touch with education programs? What pre-set notions do they have? Of what and how must I inform and persuade them?

A. In the body of the speech deal with areas that the audience may be ignorant of -

1. The technical (may need to paraphrase this in lay terms) definition of gifted and talented as well as simpler definitions that can be used with neighbors and friends.

2. Characteristics of gifted and talented students; use the questioning method: "Have you ever noticed your child exhibiting/doing this?"

3. How many children are we talking about?

4. History of the gifted program; brief but specific. Hit the high-lights. Length will depend on type of audience.

5. Respond to the popular myths voiced about gifted children and programs.

B. Now persuade!

1. Why do we need special emphasis on gifted and talented programs? Demonstrate a need.

2. Why the public school should provide it. Why it should be an integral part of the school program.

3. Inform: There is a need; now how do we go about getting a program? Briefly describe program examples (prototypes).

4. Now go into the parent's advocacy role. We demonstrate the need, then suggest how to get programs developed.

The 3rd T:

III. Conclusion: Repeat in brief form what you've already told them; but say it in a new way. Explain the larger significances of programs for gifted and talented. End with the example you started with. It can be emotional, or not so, depending on the audience.

A Speech Given To Parents By A Parent Ella Mae Gogel

Parents of the gifted are both blessed and burdened. It can be a great joy to have a gifted child, but parents often feel overwhelmed. Parents need to learn how to live comfortably with gifted children. Gifted children often think they are very different from other children and sometimes they are; but the emotional life and needs of the gifted child are very similar to the emotional needs of every child. Emotional maturity is often equated with intellectual maturity, and a great burden is placed on the child. If Lori understands our adult vocabulary and our adult concepts, it's a mistake to believe she can also respond to disappointments in an adult manner. We wonder, "Why does she need to fight with her brother and sister? She knows better than that." Don't expect your child to be gifted every moment of the day and in every aspect of her life.

It's so important to keep the lines of communication open - to really listen to your child, to listen between the lines. So often what a child says is not what she means. The question, "Are you going away tonight?" may mean "Are you going to be here, so I can talk with you?" Also watch body language and relationships with other children. Observe how your child learns and studies. Make sure she is taught to study, to orgainze materials and ideas and is able to search for information. Very often, gifted children pick up ideas, skills, and information so quickly that they can slip through school, year after year, without really learning study skills. They are never really challenged or taught.

Parents of the gifted often find it very difficult to ask for help from the school. School people can become very defensive, because a gifted child can make them uncomfortable and a parent can also cause distress. But parents know their children better than anyone, and parents must be advocates for their children. However, you are not alone. Everyone in this room can become part of a support group for gifted children. There is a chapter of Iowa Talented and Gifted Association in your area and there are 22 chapters throughout the state to help. The state newsletter will keep you informed on legislative issues now when we need funding to continue programs and to begin new programs.

There are many myths circulating about gifted children and giftedness. Everyone seems to have an opinion. For many people giftedness is an emotional issue - "We shouldn't educate an elite, in a democratic country," they say.

Others are victims of the "cream rises to the top" mentality. They say, "If the child is gifted he'll make it on his own."

Parents need to have answers to these commonly held beliefs so they can respond to them. As for educating an elite, we've done it for years for athletes. Gifted children are not making it on their own. Citing drop-out rates from recent studies can be convincing.

Parents need to know the definition of gifted - the technical one used for funding and a simple one that can inform relatives, friends and neighbors. One I made up works with my lay friends: A gifted child is one who is so bright, that the average classroom experience and curriculum is a truly frustrating experience.

Gina Ginsberg, a well-known parent, author and advocate for the gifted has a definition she uses effectively: Gifted children do things a little earlier, a little better and a little faster, and maybe a little differently than most other students.

Because everyone has opinions, fears, biases and myths about the gifted, parents must be well informed. Read everything you can find on the subject. Most magazines have had an article on giftedness during the past two years. In the past 5 years there are many more books available. I started by reading Audrey Grost's Genius in Residence. Other parent helps are:

The Gifted and Talented - A Handbook for Parents
Parentspeak on Gifted and Talented children,
Your Gifted Child and You
and Gina Ginsberg's book, How to Help Your Gifted Child.
The magazine G/C/T (Gifted, Creative/Talented) is excellent.

Parents should build a file of information on giftedness. Clip the articles you find, buy a few books. If you are to be an advocate, and a community resource on the topic - and you can all be that - then you need materials to refer to quickly and regularly.

Another file you should have, is one on your child's work - his creative writing,some of his assignments and his drawings. I also think you should keep a journal and document your child's activities, statements, and achievements. Record anecdotes. This will give you a valuable file of materials that can help the school in programming for your child. This will also relieve you of the urge to share your child's gifts and skills with everyone you meet.

So what can a parent do?

1. Accept and value your child as he really is - be supportive and open always. Give encouragement.

2. Let your child set his goals. He knows your expectations for him even when you haven't spoken them.

3. Parents should avoid responses that shut off, put down or provide ready solutions.

4. Know when to back off and let the child enjoy his own achievements. At adolesence, he may stop using his gifts because you - the parent- are enjoying them too much.

5. Gifted children are sometimes never satisifed with their achievements. Don't attack his feelings about himself, but attack the faulty belief he has.

6. Don't lose your child to an I.Q.

7. Know your child's school program intimately. Then you can talk to your child about his daily activities and question the school intelligently when necessary.

8. Stay informed and aware of your child's development.

9. Remain positive. Don't let the burdens overwhelm you. Deal with problems one-by-one and daily, but then enjoy the blessings of parenting a gifted child.

Questions and Concerns Raised By Parents During In-service Meetings

1. Are gifted children more sensitive, more in tune with the future, more fearful than other children?
2. My child is a loner. Should I do something about it?
3. How do I motivate my child to complete tasks?
4. My child is good in various subjects, should I direct his/her interest in one area or several?
5. Can my child be possessive and also mature?
6. My child is socially perceptive but often experiences "aloneness." How can we help?
7. If my family moves to another state and my daughter attends a school where there is no T.A.G. program how can we get one started?
8. How can a child be low in one subject and still be a TAG child?
9. How is it that a child can be a TAG child and "hide" it so well at home in everyday activities?
10. How can you get your child to work in his gifted area at home?
11. What criteria would you suggest for determining which students should be in a TAG program?
12. When will children who are gifted in the area of music and other "arts" receive special programs?
13. What steps should parents take if they suspect their child is gifted and they feel the school is not meeting the child's needs?
14. Is there such a thing as a gifted child who will try his best not to be gifted?
15. How do other children feel about having gifted children around them?
16. How do gifted children feel about themselves?
17. I worry about my child being labeled. Will I lose my special place with him?
18. What difference does it make to be called gifted? Who cares? I know my child is good in math. Why does he need a label?
19. Why does my child use his giftedness against me to get what she wants?
20. There seems to be a conflicting view on how my child feels about himself and how I really feel about him. Is this a common experience?

21. My child sets unrealistic expectations for himself. Do all gifted children do this?

22. Do all schools have gifted programs?

23. My child feels he stands out in a group. Do all gifted students feel different?

24. My child becomes frustrated when she has to wait for others. How can I help her?

25. Is it good for gifted children to work with the slower learner?

26. What can I do at home to provide a positive learning atmosphere?

27. Should I work at helping my gifted child "fit-in"?

28. How can I help my child to know that being gifted is not the same as being perfect?

Biographical Request

Dear Parents:

We are interested in gathering as much information as possible to help provide your child with an educational program to best fit his/her needs. Therefore, we are asking your help in providing us with some imformation that could be most valuable and might not be in school cumulative records. This information will be kept confidential and will be available only to those professional staff concerned with planning programs for your child.

We would appreciate a few minutes of your time in a written biography of your child's life up to this time. You may want to include some of the following information:

- age of walking
- age of talking
- age at which child learned alphabet
- age at which child learned to read
- types of games liked to play
- hobbies and collections
- choice of playmates
- reading interests
- special talents or skills (mathematical, problem solving, leadership, creativity)
- any successful accomplishments
- special experiences (trips, lessons)
- interests preferred when alone
- describe the child as you see him (personality, attitudes toward home, work, friends)

Feel free to include anything you might think beneficial to our purpose.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Janet McCumsey
Consultant for Gifted and Talented
Area Education Agency 7

Biography of Pam

Thank you for this opportunity to write about Pam. I will give you some developmental records and some of my notions about her.

Pam crawled continuously beginning at eight and three-fourth's months. She took her first steps, six to be exact, barefoot, and without coaxing or direction at fifteen months.

By nine and one half months, she had formulated words. She said, "Hi Daddy" and "Kitty." At twenty-two months, her words included Tom, Kay, laundromat, car, milky, messy, gooey, bus-sy, taxi, elephant, helicopter, wreath, poinsettia, bread board, dolly, fireplug, garbage, bath, she coming, Daddy sees, Mommy-Mommy, hurry, tick-tock, see you, nappy, tea cookie, Ray-cat, rocking, sleep, eat-y, telephone, etc. When Pam was five years old, I recorded the remark she made about some sour dough bread. "This crust is as tough as a walrus tusk." She has been gradually adding to her vocabulary.

She could sing the alphabet song and recognize all letters by the age of two and one-half.

The first words Pam read were, "Linda" off of a paper in Roger's office, and "PUSH" when she was with me in a restroom. She was four years old then. She watched The Children's Television Workshop - Sesame Street the first week it was introduced and still enjoys it, along with a few other public television programs. She sees other television programs very infrequently, and probably no more than four or five hours per week. I feel her early Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers experiences were very valuable. She had two years of nursery school at The First Presbyterian Church. She did

not attend kindergarten, as I chose to teach her at home. She received home school, college lessons, and two classes in music; piano and rhythm, at the American Conservatory of Music. The course was directed in the Robyn method. Both her art and music lessons were with other children. Her home school with me progressed easily and well. I began with phonics. She read Our Big Book (The New Basic Reader, Scott, Foresman & Co.), she finished We Come and Go next. She read the Harris and Clark MacMilliam reading program, pre-primer 1, 2, & 3, Opening Books, A Magic Box, and Things You See. Two Margaret Hillert books, The Three Goats and Circus Fun, were read completely (Follett beginners.) She completed the Benn books next, Spot and the Paint, By the Pool, Blackie and the Wool, and The Christmas Tree. She completed another phonetic set, Heni Wenkart series, At a Zoo, The Man in the Moon, Get Off the Desk! and The Big Puppet Mix-Up. The home school box was not a toy box. It was a chest of surprises. It contained a wheel of animals, a beginners book on botany, math flash cards, and some special Everyday Art volumes published by The American Crayon Company. The home school box was opened by me, on request, and made available only then. She entered first grade reading more than competently. Her badge, which she wore home the first day said, "I read eight books today."

Pam has always enjoyed playing house. She had several pretend playmates at three - Lucy Jane, Bill, and Betsy were the main characters. She played pretend dog quite a lot at that time, also. She enjoys numerous card games, and has always had a long concentration span when engaged in play activity.

Pam has a large gum wrapper collection, an idea she got from our Finnish exchange student. He was an avid collector, of nearly everything. Pam became interested in rocks and shells at that time, and acquired crystals

while climbing some low mountains in New Mexico, and a good selection of shells while walking along the coast of Maine.

Pam likes to play with the members of her family best. She communicates with us freely and has been taught to be honest with her feelings, so she is comfortable with her brother, who is now three and one-half, her sister, who is five, and her mother and father. (Our extended family has included two exchange students one from Finland and one from Norway; an American boy who has spent his leave with us from the Navy; and a teenage foster daughter.) When she does choose friends to have at birthday parties, or to spend the night, she has two good girl friends from school and at least ten or so other girls whom she likes. She has a good relationship with her father, in Chicago, and when there plays with children near her own age, as well as adults.

Her reading interests are broad. She has taken Humpty Dumpty, Children's Digest, Sesame Street, Cricket, and National Geographic for periodicals during the past six years. Her library is good, as is ours, so the house has just about any book on any subject that one might care to read.

Pam is talented in design. I have a photo of one of her block-shapes made at twenty-two months, which showed good spacial understanding. I have a very large group of her early art work, dated and quoted by her as she drew or painted. I believe she is talented in art.

Pam is learning guitar at school. This is her second year. She has played and sung for the church several times. She has an expressive face and a lyrical voice.

She has made numerous trips since birth. Pam is enthusiastic about traveling, exhibiting no fear or frustration about it.

While alone, she reads, draws, does crafts, plays with the dogs, plays guitar, sings, or plays solitare.

Pam has a dominant personality. She relates well with all ages and tends toward parenting her peers. She requires direction for chores and work at home. She has said she likes her home in the country with her family. I have no doubts about her success, in whatever she may choose to do. She has an active mind coupled with a tender concern for other people and life.

Biography of David

Walked at 11 months.

Was saying words, singingly at 9 months.

As for alphabet and reading, David has 2 older sisters and 2 older brothers from 18 down, so these things he just did as the others were studying. David liked quiet activities and as he was the only one not in school, spent his time with myself and my activities. I am an artist and professional weaver and needleworker. David just does things, he never questioned how. At Christmas this year, our eleven year old son received a "little prof" by Texas Instruments - a semi calculator. It was suggested for 5th grade thru 8th. David sat down and played along with his brother.

He has visited the Brookfield Zoo, the Museum of Science and Industry, Sears Tower, Navy Pier, etc. in Chicago. He has no one in our neighborhood his own age and never has for that matter.

He likes to draw and paint, etc. and has from the very beginning. He had paints when he was 18 mo. old. Very messy. Will sit for hours with books. Although when asked he joins in play. Does not turn on TV himself. He watches for 10-15 minutes and will find another activity. Has woven on my loom with me.

David at home is quiet. I was very distressed when he came home from kindergarten, talking baby talk and using Donald Duck voice to mimic people and friends. He's been difficult to discipline in 1st grade. Engaging in "dumb attitudes." I couldn't accept it. He seemed to pick up this, so-called, show off attitude. He came home often saying "Do I have to go, I'm bored," "Why do I have to go to school? We do the same thing over and over." These were comments at the beginning of the year. Not so prevalent now.

As a young baby David lifted his head and shoulders at 2 weeks to a month. Sat up at 3-4 months. Was a large baby weighing 22 lbs. at 4 months. He was strong and even then was keeping up to the best of his ability, with his surroundings. His doctor was amazed at his physical ability.

I did not feel David was any different than my other children, because he was alone most of the time, his interests were able to be developed.

One thing comes to mind, when David was 18 months, he opened his can of soup, put it in the pan and turned the left front burner on (put the pan on first) and announced when the noon whistle blew, "lunch is ready." (It was.) His favorite place to play was in the kitchen with the pots and pans and in the sink, etc. I haven't said no or scolded him for trying. I have only kept the dangerous things away from him. When he was 2 years old he could pound a nail straight into a board and use a hand saw and drill a hole. All activities he did with his brother and then by himself. If someone did something, you could be certain a little later David would be doing it. Never asking how, just doing it.

I do not believe in toys. My children were all given the real McCoy so they would have satisfactory results, in the case of the hammer, etc. I did not want to teach them "the breaking plastic syndrome." We have many books, puzzles, paints, clay and tools. Actual materials produce actual results and a sense of accomplishment. I assumed everyone did this. I have since found out differently.

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APPENDIX

THE DEMANDS OF GIFTEDNESS*

Premises:

1. High level intelligence makes certain demands upon the gifted child.
2. Behavior of gifted children results from these demands.
3. There are curriculum implications inherent in these demands.

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1. A craving for knowledge - the need to feel progress in what he is learning.
2. A need to focus on or devour a subject.
3. A demand to make observations, to see relationships.
4. The placement of high standards on himself.
5. To be creative or inventive, to seek an unusual or unique approach to an assignment.
6. To question generalizations.
7. To be serious-minded. (Cannot tolerate foolishness or silliness, usually)
8. To concentrate - to become totally absorbed in a task - a longer attention span.
9. To explore wide interests at a maturity beyond his chronological age.
10. To be sensitive to the honor and truth.
11. To express ideas and reactions. (Sometimes seen as argumentative)
12. To resist routine, drill; the need for unique ways of pursuing drill.
13. To work alone.
14. To be intolerant of stupidity.
15. To seek order, structure, and consistency.
16. To do critical, evaluative thinking. (May lead to critical attitude toward self and others).
17. To be rarely satisfied with the simple and obvious.
18. To be impatient with sloppy or disorganized thinking.
19. To be sensitive and empathetic.
20. To have his intelligence responded to.
21. To seek out his mental peers.
22. To be friendly and outgoing.
23. To use his power of abstraction, to see and point out cause and effect relationships.
24. To have time for thinking - solitude.
25. To pursue a learning pace of his own. (May be fast or slow).
26. To be outstanding in several areas but average in some.

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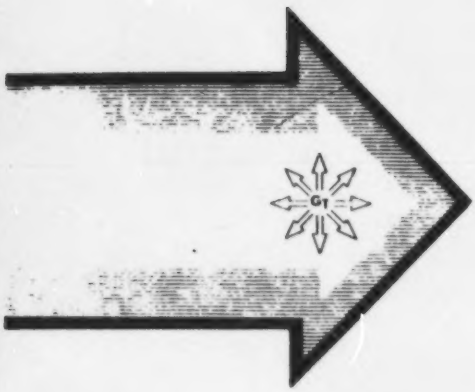
* Courtesy to duplicate given by Miss Jeanne Delp, Coordinator, Programs for the Gifted, Garden Grove School District.



International Year of the Child 1979

PARENTS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

What is a good working definition of gifted and talented?

The US Office of Education has identified six areas in which children may demonstrate capabilities of high performance or giftedness.

- General intellectual ability—the all around bright child.
- Specific academic aptitude—the math or science whiz.
- Creative or productive thinking—the child who comes up with novel solutions to problems.
- Leadership ability—initiates and leads games and groups.
- Ability in the visual or performing arts—painting, music, drama, and sculpture.
- Psychomotor ability—athletic ability and mechanical skills.

A gifted child may have one or more of these abilities. One leading educator defines gifted and talented children as those who have learned to use the symbol systems of our society at a much higher and more effective rate than other children. However, a parent leader offers a less technical definition, saying gifted and talented children do things a little earlier, a little better, a little more quickly, and a little bit differently from other children. Parents also gather much useful information by observing the behavior of their children.

What are some behaviors or characteristics to look for?

- Gifted children learn to read earlier often before entering school and sometimes on their own and with a greater comprehension of the nuances of language.
- They usually have large vocabularies for their age.
- They learn basic skills more quickly and need less practice.
- They display an ability for abstract thinking in advance of their peers.
- Their concentration and attention spans are longer.
- They often have a wide variety of interests and experiment with them.
- They have a highly developed sense of curiosity and a limitless supply of questions.
- They are good guessers.
- They can construct relationships between things that are not readily obvious.
- They can retain a lot of information.
- They usually relate well to peers and adults.

Many behavioral checklists for gifted and talented children are available. Check with your school system or with one of the resources listed in this fact sheet for assistance in securing a checklist.

How is a gifted and talented child identified?

Several sources of information should be used to identify gifted and talented children, such as reports from teachers, parental observations, pupil products, school achievement, standardized tests of intelligence and creativity, case studies, and other measures.

My children have been identified as gifted and talented. What can I do at home to encourage them?

- It is important to provide a variety of stimuli and experience geared to the child's natural interests. Books, toys, stories, puzzles, and games are obviously helpful, but you should also take care to provide materials and experiences that enrich imagery, challenge the child's abilities, and encourage the development of perceptual and motor skills.
- Encourage your children to record their ideas in some way. Parents can sometimes play secretary.
- Permit ample time for thinking and daydreaming. These are the child's equivalent to a full time job.
- Assign household tasks that coincide with interests.
- Encourage your children to translate their interests into specific products, e.g., stories, pictures, collections, inventions, tools. Be a cautious editor. Budding creativity does not stand up well to stifling in the name of correctness.
- Accept and use the tendency to see things differently.
- Encourage active rather than passive learning.

- Play word games. Common settings like shopping and shared chores provide occasions for all kinds of word play.
- Do not be anxious about single mindedness—"All she cares cares about is horses!" This, too, shall pass.
- Develop the habit of asking your children as many questions as you are asked. For example, "What would happen if . . . ?" "How does it work?" "How would you change it?" "What else can you do with that?" "Why?" "What will it be like a (week, month, year) from now?"

My children are gifted and talented but they seem turned off and tuned out. What's going on?

A gifted and talented child is a child first and gifted and talented second. Like all children, they need and respond to the love, caring, interest, and guidance of their parents. Sometimes, however, being gifted and talented becomes a burden, especially if the children's environment does not meet their needs and expectations or if peers react negatively to their abilities. They may act out frustrations in the form of disruptive behavior, become insecure, or withdraw. It is not uncommon for gifted and talented children to achieve at levels lower than their capabilities if lack of a challenge in school produces disinterest. Meeting these problems will require a cooperative effort between parents, school officials, and in some cases, a professional counselor.

What about programs in the schools?

Many schools have programs for gifted and talented children, but they are not always appropriate for every gifted and talented child. Program administrators and teachers can help you decide. If no program exists, you may want to think about helping to start one or consult with teachers to see what can be done to meet your child's special needs within the regular class.

Is there an association or group I can join?

There is probably a state level association for parents of gifted and talented children in your state or in a large city near you. Address inquiries to your state education agency's consultant for the gifted and talented. You may also want to join one of these national associations which welcome parents:

The Association for the Gifted
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

The American Association for Gifted Children
15 Gramercy Park
New York, NY 10003

The National Association for Gifted Children
217 Gregory Drive
Hot Springs, AR 71901

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International Year of the Child 1979

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

There are numerous lists of characteristics or distinguishing features and attributes of gifted and talented children. Teachers and parents should interpret any single list, including this one, as exemplary rather than exclusive. Few gifted children will display all of the characteristics. Understanding the characteristics of gifted and talented children will help parents and teachers sharpen their observations of these children in two distinct ways: (a) While characteristics do not necessarily define who is a gifted child, they do constitute observable behaviors that can be thought of as clues to more specific behaviors, and (b) these characteristics are signals to indicate that a particular child might warrant closer observation and could require specialized educational attention, pending a more comprehensive assessment.

General characteristics of gifted/talented children.

- They typically learn to read earlier with a better comprehension of the nuances of the language. As many as half of the gifted and talented population have learned to read before entering school. They often read widely, quickly, and intensely and have large vocabularies.
- They commonly learn basic skills better, more quickly, and with less practice.
- They are better able to construct and handle abstractions than their age mates.
- They are frequently able to pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences which other children have to have spelled out for them.
- They take less for granted, seeking the "hows" and "whys."
- They display a better ability to work independently at an earlier age and for longer periods of time than other children.
- They can sustain longer periods of concentration and attention.
- Their interests are often both wildly eclectic and intensely focused.
- They frequently have seemingly boundless energy, which sometimes leads to a misdiagnosis of "hyperactive."
- They are usually able to respond and relate well to parents, teachers, and other adults. They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.

Creative characteristics.

- They are *fluent* thinkers, able to produce a large quantity of possibilities, consequences, or related ideas.
- They are *flexible* thinkers, able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
- They are *original* thinkers, seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations among items of information. They also have an ability to see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.
- They are *elaborative* thinkers, producing new steps, ideas, responses, or other embellishments to a basic idea, situation, or problem.
- They show a willingness to entertain complexity and seem to thrive in problem situations.
- They are good guessers and can construct hypotheses or "what if" questions readily.
- They often are aware of their own impulsiveness and the irrationality within themselves and show emotional sensitivity.
- They have a high level of curiosity about objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- They often display intellectual playfulness, fantasize, and imagine readily.
- They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peers in expressing opinions and ideas and often exhibit spirited disagreement.
- They have a sensitivity to beauty and are attracted to aesthetic dimensions.

Learning characteristics.

- Gifted and talented children often show keen powers of observation, exhibit a sense of the significant, and have an eye for important details.
- They often read a great deal on their own, preferring books and magazines written for youngsters older than themselves.
- They take great pleasure in intellectual activity.
- They have well developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesizing abilities.
- They have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships.
- They tend to like structure, organization, and consistency in their environments. They may resent the violation of structure and rules.
- They display a questioning attitude and seek information for the sake of having it as much as for its instrumental value.
- They are often skeptical, critical, and evaluative. They are quick to spot inconsistencies.
- They often have a large storehouse of information regarding a variety of topics which they can recall quickly.
- They show a ready grasp of underlying principles and can often make valid generalizations about events, people, or objects.
- They readily perceive similarities, differences, and anomalies.
- They often attack complicated material by separating it into its components and analyzing it systematically.
- They have a well developed common sense.

Behavioral characteristics.

- They are willing to examine the unusual and are highly inquisitive.
- Their behavior is often well organized, goal directed, and efficient with respect to tasks and problems.
- They exhibit an intrinsic motivation to learn, find out, or explore and are often very persistent. "I'd rather do it myself" is a common attitude.
- They enjoy learning new things and new ways of doing things.
- They have a longer attention and concentration span than their peers.
- They are more independent and less subject to peer pressure than their age mates. They are able to be conforming or nonconforming as the situation demands.
- They have a highly developed moral and ethical sense.
- They are able to integrate opposing impulses, such as constructive and destructive behavior.
- They often exhibit daydreaming behavior.
- They may seek to conceal their abilities so as not to "stick out."
- They often have a well developed sense of self and a realistic idea about their capabilities and potential.

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Prepared by Bruce Boston, Fairfax, Virginia.

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International Year of the Child 1979

IDENTIFICATION OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

Because human potential can express itself across a broad spectrum of specific abilities, and because the outer limits of potential can also be reached in this same variety of contexts, the most important question to ask when identifying the gifted and talented is "gifted at what?"

In recent years educators of the gifted and talented have spurned a generalized notion of giftedness which, historically, has concentrated on particular cognitive skills such as verbal and reasoning abilities. Instead, a concept of giftedness has been advanced which looks at specific ability areas, stressing the capability of high performance in such diverse contexts as creative and productive thinking, the visual and performing arts, leadership ability, and psychomotor ability, in addition to more traditional expressions of giftedness like general intellectual ability, or in readily measurable specific abilities such as math, physics, or chemistry.

Because identifying gifts and talents other than sheer academic ability is still a relatively unrefined diagnostic skill, some school systems continue to cling to standardized ability and aptitude tests to identify *all* kinds of gifted and talented children. Other useful methods may include: teacher nomination, parent interviews, peer nomination, autobiographical inventories, case studies, the evaluation of student products, auditions, and teacher observation checklists. Some more appropriate methods and steps are suggested below in regard to the six ability areas set forth by the US Office of Education as contexts in which giftedness or talent may emerge.

Screening for general intellectual ability

Many school systems make use of group IQ tests for their first level screening effort. Although research has shown group tests to be misleading when used as a rigid guideline, they are still one of the more effective methods of defining a group which then can be more carefully assessed on an individual basis. The Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test and The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Revised (WISC-R) are considered to be among the best instruments currently available for identifying children with high general intellectual ability on an individual basis. Additional nominations of potentially gifted youngsters should be sought from parents, peers, teachers, and librarians. Minimum IQ scores of 125 to 135 are generally required for placement in a program for the intellectually gifted. In dealing with minority, disadvantaged, and handicapped children, extreme caution is advised in relying on IQ scores since most tests have not been standardized on these populations.

Probing for creative or productive thinking

In addition to the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, a number of nontest ways of identifying the creatively gifted have been described by E. Paul Torrance (1977). His techniques are based on the observation of children's behavior and an analysis of what they produce. Strengths in the following areas may indicate exceptional creativity.

- Ability to express feelings and emotions
- Ability to improvise with commonplace materials and objects
- Articulateness in role playing, sociodrama, and story telling
- Enjoyment of and ability in visual arts, such as drawing, painting, and sculpture
- Enjoyment of and ability in creative movement, dance, and dramatics
- Enjoyment of and ability in instrumental and vocal music and music rhythm
- Use of expressive speech
- Fluency and flexibility in figural media
- Enjoyment of and skills in group activities and problem solving
- Responsiveness to the concrete
- Responsiveness to the kinesthetic
- Expressiveness of gestures and body language and the ability to interpret body language
- Humor
- Richness of imagery in informal language
- Originality of ideas in problem solving
- Problem centeredness or persistence in problem solving

- Emotional responsiveness
- Quickness of warm-up

Discovering talent in visual and performing arts

The opinions of experts, peers, and parents should be solicited when identifying children with special talents. A biographical sketch by a parent can reveal a great deal about precocity in all areas of exceptional ability. Children who take lessons in dance, music, and art outside the school setting should be identified and their teachers asked to comment on the child's potential. Auditions may be conducted. Often a youngster's peers know more about a child's special talents than do the adults in the environment. Ask students to list classmates whom they would like to have help them with art projects, or to nominate classmates for a talent show. Arts specialists within the school system are also excellent resources for identifying talented youngsters.

Determining exceptional leadership ability

Within a given school or community there are *emerging* leaders as well as class presidents. Leaderships is not always channeled in socially acceptable ways. The child who "gets others in trouble" is still a leader, as are *con artists* and *hustlers*. The search for leadership potential should include community workers connected with churches, Scout troops, preschool centers, playgrounds, and recreation halls. The list should include young children who seem to be competing successfully with older children. The search should identify leaders of street gangs. Ask parents if their children take charge in their daily routines. Ask dance teachers, "Who innovates?" and "Who leads and who follows?" Observation by teachers is invaluable in identifying class and school leaders.

Determining specific academic aptitudes

While the standardized group achievement tests often used to screen for specific academic aptitudes are useful for measuring acquired knowledge, they are not designed to indicate potential. Children who are consumed by specific interests, e.g. dinosaurs, volcanoes, puzzles, or stamps, may be in the first stages of demonstrating a specific academic aptitude. Self motivation is a strong indicator of exceptional ability and early identification and nurture are essential. Parents and/or students may be asked to fill out checklists indicating how free time is spent and what specific interests are pursued.

Identifying outstanding psychomotor ability

Who is chosen first by other children as game leader? Who always seems to be on the winning team? Observe children on the playground. Ask parents about outside activities. At what age did the child ride a bicycle? Bat a ball? Does the youngster show special talent or interest in dance, gymnastics, swimming? Does he or she enter athletic competitions? Can the child fix things easily? Ask Little League coaches, athletic club directors, and dancing school teachers for nominations of the potentially gifted in psychomotor ability.

Successful procedures

A successful screening and identification program requires early identification, a continuing search, the involvement of a variety of professionals, community workers, and parents and the use of multiple methods. Flexibility is required to discover children who are believed to have outstanding potential but who may not qualify on the basis of test scores. Some hold the mistaken belief that "talent will out." Research has shown, however, that talent and ability have a better chance of flourishing if they are identified early and nurtured consistently.

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Prepared by Jean N. Nazzaro, The Council for Exceptional Children.

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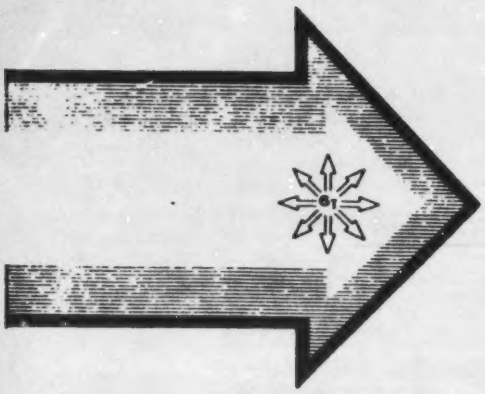

International Year of the Child 1979

WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

It has been said that the ordinary man looks at the world and sees what everyone else sees, but the creative man looks at the world and thinks what no one else has thought. A fairly good thumbnail definition of creativity, then, is that it is the process of combining what exists into something new, whether in the form of an idea, a procedure, or a product.

Some people are better at doing this than others, and this ability manifests itself in children as well as adults. Each of us has had what might be called an "Aha!" experience, and all of us can learn to foster our creativity by developing the necessary abilities, if we better understand the process of creative thinking.

What is creative thinking?

The creative process can be understood best by looking at the stages involved in finding a creative solution to a particular problem. Although experts have differing ways of explaining exactly what happens, most agree that a four stage process takes place.

The first stage may be called the *definition* of the problem. Many refer to it as "statement" or "fact finding." But the basic idea is to gather together as much information as possible about the problem—its extent, nature, and qualities. Most important to this stage is to keep an open mind, to state the problem in as many different ways as possible, and to have as much information as is available. The search for facts and information may, however, become so self perpetuating that it never ends. It is necessary, at some point, to call a halt, usually when one feels that further defining activity has reached the level of diminishing returns.

After the problem has been defined, the second stage of *brainstorming*, or idea finding begins. Here problem solvers engage in free association techniques of various kinds to jolt their minds out of conventional tracks and into unconventional areas. Word play, extravagant wishes, scenarios, and way out ideas are all actively encouraged. During this phase it is crucial that all ideas be accepted, and that the quality of ideas not be judged. The emphasis is on quantity, not quality. Something that seems silly may trigger a solution from another quarter.

The next stage in the process is the most mysterious and ill-defined. Although this stage is not well understood, most experts agree it is crucial to creative problem solving. It can be described as a *pause*, or as some call it, a fallow period in which the previous activities of definition and brainstorming are allowed to cook. Sometimes it is helpful to leave the problem solving altogether and turn attention to an unrelated activity. Many creative problem solving techniques have this down time as a formally structured component. The result is often that a solution leaps unbidden to the consciousness, almost as a bolt from the blue. This result is well documented in the writings of creative individuals.

Solution finding is the final stage, and it frequently receives less than its fair share of attention. It is a dependent activity which requires accurate definitions, brainstorming, a creative pause, and the selection of the best alternative for implementing a solution. During the idea finding stage, it is best to suspend judgment about the ideas generated; during this stage, alternatives must be evaluated according to carefully chosen criteria.

When using creative problem solving processes it is very important to remember that idea finding and solution finding are distinct and separate stages. Deferring judgment until the final stage will encourage the development of more and better ideas.

What abilities are necessary to be creative?

There are four basic abilities necessary to creativity and problem solving operations: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

Fluency is part of the information retrieval process. A person gathers information and stores it until needed in the mind. The ability to retrieve it quickly and in quantity is called fluency, which is generally measured by the number of different ideas an individual generates in response to a specific problem. A student may be asked, for example, to list all the possible uses for a brick. If the student lists: "paperweight, anchor, doorstop, breaking a window, crushing nuts," and so on for several more ideas, the student is demonstrating fluency. This trait may also be observed in class discussions

when a student offers many ideas on one topic, or generates several ways to implement an idea.

Flexibility is the ability to switch from one *kind* of thought to another. In problem solving and other creative activities people must be able to generate a variety of applications of a particular principle or concept. In the above example, the possibilities cited for using the brick demonstrate flexibility, since both the weight of the brick (as an anchor or doorstop) and its potential as an implement of destruction (breaking windows) were considered. If the list should include "build a house" and "make bookshelves," other properties of the brick would be brought into play and, hence, other kinds of uses. Flexibility, then, is the ability to transcend the boundaries of a given context when solving problems. It can be demonstrated in the classroom when a student switches easily from one topic to another, or generates several different kinds of alternatives in problem solving situations.

Originality, often assumed to be the same as creativity, is really the ability to come up with unique or unusual ideas, concepts, or alternatives. To continue our example for a moment, using a brick to build buildings is not very original; however, using it as a pencil holder or grinding it up to use the dust as a bird cage liner are unusual responses.

Elaboration is the ability to embellish and/or complete an idea. The student who suggests using a brick as a pencil holder may demonstrate elaborative thinking by covering the bottom with felt, painting the brick, modifying the sizes of the holes in the brick to accommodate different sizes of pencils.

Prepared by Penny Saletta, DHEW Region IX

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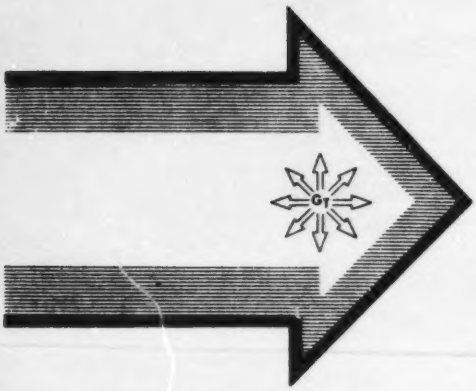

THE PRESCHOOL GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILD

International Year of the Child 1979

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

Who is the preschool gifted and talented child?

The preschool child, ages 2-5, who functions significantly above age level in language development, cognitive and social skills, physical adaptability, creativity, or leadership may in fact be gifted and talented. Criteria for identifying preschool gifted and talented children may be specifically defined by state or local guidelines.

Is early identification and education of value to the preschool gifted and talented child?

There are strong indications that much of a person's mature intelligence is developed between conception and 4 years of age. Therefore, it is important that the young gifted and talented child be exposed to a high quality learning environment as soon as possible. Learning environments should be designed to meet the unique needs of each child, and the child's indication of readiness to learn should be a determining factor in the type of challenge presented. It is important to remember that demonstration of advanced ability in one area does not necessarily mean similar levels of competence in all areas.

How can a preschool gifted and talented child be identified?

If a standardized intelligence test is to be used as a part of the identification process, it should be administered by a professional who is experienced in working with preschool children. A child with advanced skills may not have been exposed to the types of experiences necessary for superior performance on a standardized IQ test.

Tests should never be used exclusively to determine children's potential ability for assessing cognitive development. Techniques such as those developed by Piaget may effectively supplement standardized measures. Teacher checklists, parent observations, and peer nomination procedures are all helpful in identifying gifted and talented children.

What are teacher checklists?

If a child is enrolled in a preschool program, the teacher will have many opportunities to observe those characteristics and behaviors that may indicate exceptional ability. Some of the characteristics that a teacher could observe in gifted and talented preschool children are:

- The use of advanced vocabulary for their age.
- Employment of spontaneous verbal elaboration with new experiences.
- The ability to construct interesting or unusual shapes or patterns through various media, such as blocks, play dough, and crayons.
- The ability to assemble puzzles designed for older children.
- A sense of humor used in general conversation.
- An understanding of abstract concepts, such as death and time.
- Mastery of new skills with little repetition.
- Demonstration of advanced physical skills.
- Demonstration of advanced reasoning skills through the explanation of occurrences.

The use of a checklist that includes these and other characteristics can be of great help in alerting teachers to potentially gifted and talented children.

What should parents be looking for in observing their children?

Parent observations can assist in the identification of preschool gifted children. Parents are able to supply developmental information and other data not readily observable in more structured situations. A child's approach to dramatic play, constructive play, and humor can provide a great deal of information regarding the child's level of cognitive development. Intensive interaction among young children takes place during less supervised and less structured play situations and therefore, should be included as part of a comprehensive identification process. Observations should take place when children are free to choose activities either alone or with others and when they have access to a variety of materials. Free play behavior should be observed for periods of approximately 15 minutes. Include at least one indoor and one out-

door observation. Make observations for several days and record them for future reference.

Some questions which may guide parent observation are:

- *Dramatic play.* Do your children ever engage in make believe play in which they pretend or simulate situations and people? Which best describes the variety in your children's dramatic play? (a) have one favorite theme which they use almost all of the time, (b) have two or three favorite themes which they like to vary but generally stick with, or (c) have a wide range of themes and enjoy variety.
- *Constructive play.* Do your children ever engage in play in which they make things, build things, or draw? When they are free to build or make things, what do they make? Which statement best applies to the products of your children's constructive play? (a) attempt to make products as representative of reality as possible, (b) products have some representation to reality but have some unique aspects as well, or (c) draw or make things as they remember them or as they would like for them to be with little attention to perspective, proportion, or relationships.
- *Humor.* Which statement best describes your children's ability to perceive humor? (a) make little or no attempt to do or say funny things, (b) attempt to do or say some funny things primarily to imitate what they have seen others do, or (c) can take information and use it to produce creative humor which is new for them.

Why should information from a child's peers be considered?

Children's perceptions of their peers can be a revealing source of information. Therefore, nominations of children by their peers should be included in the identification process, especially at the preschool level. To find out how children who possess unique abilities are perceived by their peers, the following types of questions can be asked:

- Which child in class can make a broken toy work?
- Who in the class can make up the best new game?
- Who is the very best at following directions?
- Who asks the most questions?

How can parents help meet the needs of the preschool gifted and talented child?

Parents can help meet the needs of their preschool gifted and talented children by providing them with a wide variety of experiences. Take children to museums, airports, and the library. Play new games, do experiments, engage in sports, together. If your child is enrolled in a structured educational or enrichment program, parent participation, input, and support are vital to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of the child. Parents are their child's first teachers and, therefore, have a responsibility to provide that child with secure, quality, learning environments.

Where can I get more information about preschool gifted and talented children?

If you are interested in more information on preschool gifted and talented children, you may wish to contact the state consultant for the gifted in your state department of education or write.

Information Services for the Gifted and Talented
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

RESOURCES

Delp, J., & Martinson, R. *The gifted and talented: A handbook for parents.* Ventura, CA: Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools, 1975.

Eberle, R. *Scamper: Games for imagination and development.* Buffalo, NY: D.O.K. Publishers, 1971.

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Renzulli, J. S. *New directions in creativity.* New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

Sharp, D. *Thinking is child's play.* New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969.

Prepared by Gail Hanninen, Panhandle Child Development Association, Inc., Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and John Grossi, The Council for Exceptional Children.

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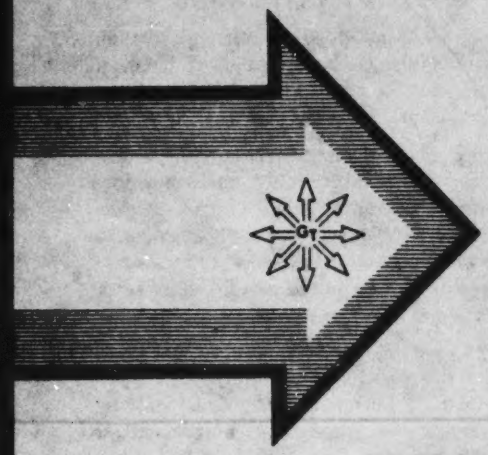

FORMING A LOCAL PARENT ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

The following suggestions on forming a parent association are intended only as general guidelines. Although each local group will use the suggestions that will be most helpful in terms of its own needs, circumstances, and goals, two points are paramount: (a) Allow your group time to grow. Many times school districts will adopt a "wait and see" attitude before establishing a working relationship with a parent group, and (b) remember also that the school district is not the "enemy." It represents your best chance of securing appropriate educational opportunities for gifted and talented children.

How should I go about establishing and developing a parent group?

- *Membership.* Parent groups can begin with just a few concerned parents and educators. New members can be located and recruited through advertisements in PTA newsletters, community association newsletters, the local newspapers, and by word of mouth. From among initial respondents, a steering committee can be set up and task forces assigned to deal with specific concerns.
- *Affiliation with a state level group.* Many statewide groups have community chapters, enabling local members to participate in a larger advocacy network. The community group can also receive valuable support during its organizational stage with technical assistance available at the state level. If your state does not have a state level group, you may want to investigate affiliation with an existing organization in a neighboring community.
- *Group name.* You may choose something relatively straightforward, such as The (City) Chapter of (State) Association for the Gifted and Talented, or you may select another name which reflects special concerns. You should, however, choose a name which reflects your advocacy interest so that it can be easily recognized by prospective members.
- *Constitution and bylaws.* The constitution and bylaws of the state association may serve as a model and you can insert material which relates to local needs or purposes. A copy of the constitution and bylaws along with membership cards should be supplied to all members. If there is no state association, your constitution should cover the group's purposes, offices, elections, committees, meetings, meeting procedures, and amendment procedures. Bylaws should reflect local matters such as dues and should be flexible enough to permit easy changes.
- *Meetings.* State associations frequently offer special interest workshops and programs in various locations throughout the state. A team of representatives from your local group may want to attend and report back to your group. Consider developing a speaker's program based on an "interest inventory" of the membership. Topics might include: parenting the gifted and talented, characteristics of the gifted and talented, state and federal legislation, reports from other programs in the state, and summer programs. Meetings can also be scheduled around advocacy activities, field trips with children, and social events.
- *Dues.* Dues should be sufficiently high to cover the operating expenses of the association, such as mailings, phone costs, speaker's programs, refreshments, and advocacy activities such as a trip to the state capitol to talk to legislators. However, try to keep dues as low as possible.
- *Newsletter.* If your state has a state association, it most likely has a newsletter which keeps local chapters informed about state, local, and national events. Local chapters can submit news items, a calendar of events, and reports on programs. If no newsletter is available, start your own. It can become a vital communication link among members, schools, and the community. It may also attract new members.

As you get under way, what should you be concerned with first?

- *Make sure your objectives are clear.* Determine the primary purpose(s) of your group and be able to identify the advantages of belonging.
- *Make sure the group's structure conforms to its objectives.* There are many areas of interest and action for parent associations, each of which should have a separate task

force. These task forces should concern themselves with increasing the awareness of the needs of gifted and talented children in the home, school, and community; establishing weekend, parent run enrichment programs outside the school system; developing a volunteer program to provide special classes within the schools; encouraging community agencies to offer opportunities and programs for gifted and talented students; supporting the efforts of the local school system; investigating special needs of gifted and talented students, such as development of the affective domain; and supporting legislation at state and federal levels.

- *Keep accurate records.* Information on group activities, membership, a "skill roster," resources, and accomplishments has both present and future value.
- *Communication.* In addition to a newsletter, develop a telephone network both for routing organizational matters and for responding to urgent requests for legislative support.
- *Be ready to evaluate.* If your objectives are clear at the outset, you will better be able to assess the group's effectiveness and develop strategies for improvement.

What kind of agenda should a parent group have to keep the group going?

- *Visit the school system.* Contact the superintendent of schools for an appointment to discuss programs and plans for the gifted and talented. Ask about their relative priority within the school district and the state. If programs are available, visit them and talk to principals and teachers. Become thoroughly familiar with school board procedures. Parent groups can also volunteer support. If programs are not locally available, offer to cooperate in getting them started.
- *Survey the community.* The group can contact each school and PTA to determine the number and needs of gifted and talented students in the community. Investigate community resources, such as educational, cultural, and governmental units, to determine what services already exist and who can help with unmet needs. Explore the possibility of developing private sector resources to start or expand programs.
- *Establish linkages.* Parent groups in neighboring communities are often sources of valuable information on pitfalls to avoid, program suggestions, speakers, and moral support. Cooperative ventures can also be launched.
- *Contact the state consultant for the gifted and talented.* Each state department of education has a person assigned to the area of gifted and talented education. You can request information on legislation and funding, programs, other parent groups and their activities, agencies which provide services for the gifted and talented, and where to locate materials to distribute to your members.
- *Contact your legislators.* Become thoroughly familiar with your state's laws and the state education agency's policy on the education of the gifted and talented. When you contact your state senator or representative, be prepared to speak in *specific* terms about both legislation and policy. Invite legislators to speak to your group and be prepared to contact them during each legislative session to offer support and express particular interests.

RESOURCES

Kaufman, Felice. *Your gifted child and you.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1976.

Delp, J., & Martinson, R. *The gifted and talented: A handbook for parents.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1975.

Coffey, K. et al. *Parents speak on gifted and talented children.* Ventura, CA: Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools, 1976.

Prepared by Lynne D. Niro, Hamden, Connecticut.

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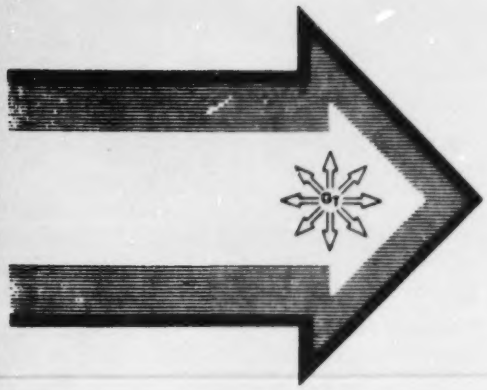

International Year of the Child 1979

FINDING FUNDS FOR GIFTED PROGRAMS

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

In a nation sold on the idea that equal education means the same education for all students, advocates of special education for any exceptional group must work to convince the rest of the community of the need for different educational programs.

Advocates of programs for the gifted and talented frequently must act as persuasive salesmen in communities that spend their money on other "products." This includes convincing them to pay the bill for services.

Sprucing up the idea.

Right now you probably have an idea either to begin, continue, or expand a program for the gifted and talented. A number of other people support this idea and are willing to work with you. Together your group must start selling the idea to others. This requires expanding the idea and developing it into a written program proposal which should clearly and concisely explain what is to be accomplished, who expects to accomplish it, how much it will cost, and how long the program will last. Below are some features which you should consider in your written program proposal:

- *Description of the program.* This should contain an objective assessment of the need for such a program with a defense of why *this* program is needed, clearly stated goals and objectives, and major features of the proposed program and how these will meet the stated objectives.
- *Staffing.* This section should give brief explanations of positions and duties, the biography or vita of key individuals who have already been selected and the qualifications required for selection of the other positions, as well as establish that the staff can accomplish the job.
- *Budget.* This should present a clear delineation of costs including rationale for figures. The figures should be realistic not "padded" to allow room for bargaining.
- *History of your organization, if applicable.* This should describe the objectives of your group and give an explanation of your past achievements and resources.
- *Other materials.* Some that you may want to include in your program proposal are letters of endorsement or any other materials you think are relevant, such as reports of previous projects or activities.

Who might buy it.

Pull the program supporters together and outline a strategy for obtaining the necessary funds. Such a strategy should probably focus first on local sources for support. When these are exhausted and you have not obtained the needed funds, then consider state level sources. National level sources, such as the federal government and foundations, should probably be solicited last as these sources often require a great deal of competitive effort to locate and to meet their requirements. Also, waiting for approval of your program and the actual receipt of the first check may take too much time.

Your group may want to "brainstorm" local sources that should be considered. Remember to include your school district, local business and industry, local branches of nationwide companies, civic organizations, and local philanthropists. Often the key to receiving money is a personal contact within an organization, so as you brainstorm find out who has any special contact with the possible source. Use these contacts when approaching the sources to request funding. For example, the proposal could be sent along with a letter introducing the program and expressing personal support from an influential friend of your group.

If you also need to solicit from statewide sources, you may wish to contact the consultant for gifted and talented in your state's department of education as well as resources familiar with business and industry in your state.

Your strategy should be flexible so that a refusal from one organization does not halt your efforts. You may only get a portion of your funding from one source and it may take the contributions of several organizations or agencies to yield your total budget.

How to sell it.

You have written your proposal and identified sources which may be interested in funding it. Now comes the selling part of

the process when you convince enough of those sources to buy your program. This may require considerable flexibility as you emphasize some aspects of your program and de-emphasize others in order to match the funding priorities of different potential supporters.

Before you approach an organization, investigate their objectives, their interests, and the nature of their past and present contributions. Tailor your proposal and presentation to appeal to their unique pattern of involvement.

After you have decided on your approach to a given organization, you should initiate the first contact by telephone or letter. Make sure that your first contact, particularly if it is a letter, is directed to the proper person. The purpose of this contact is to ascertain if the organization is interested in hearing more about your program. It probably will be better to wait before mailing or taking the full proposal to them until after they have shown an interest. They will respond by indicating the criteria or specifications which should be used to amend the proposal to make it acceptable.

When the organization expresses a further interest in examining your program, respond quickly with the proposal and a cover letter. If possible this letter should be written by a person who has a contact in the organization. The spokesperson for the proposal may wish to include the key individual(s) of the program when visiting an interested source of funding.

Finally, when you have sold your program to enough organizations to achieve your funding goal, don't forget "the hand that feeds you." Keep up the contacts and advise them of your progress. If you have to go through another round of selling, you will probably already have developed a core of convinced listeners.

RESOURCES

The bread game: The realities of foundation fundraising. San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1972.

The foundation directory. (6th ed.). New York: The Foundation Center, 1977. (Available through your public library. The introduction provides helpful information on structuring a foundation proposal.)

You may also want to write to the following organizations:

The Foundation Center
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019

Office of Gifted and Talented
US Office of Education
400 6th Street, S.W., Room 3835
Washington, D.C. 20202

For listings of businesses and industries, write to your local or state chamber of commerce or:

US Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20062

Discuss your program with the consultant for gifted and talented in your state education agency.

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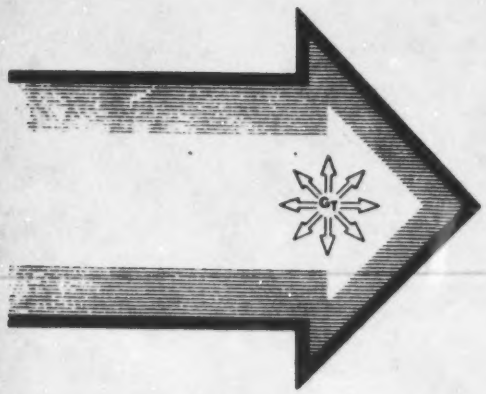

International Year of the Child 1979

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY BASED MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, US Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by The Council for Exceptional Children.

What is a mentor?

A mentor is one who already stands within the context of a particular tradition, discipline, profession, or craft and who serves as an advisor, guide, teacher, and role model to those who seek access to the mentor's world and skills.

What characteristics should a mentor have?

There are no set rules, especially since the mentorship plays such a highly individualized educational role. In general, however, the mentor:

- Is usually but not always an adult.
- Has a special skill, interest, or activity which engages the learner's interest.
- Is able to guide the learner toward personally rewarding experiences where challenges can be met, skills developed, problems solved, and relationships established.
- Is flexible, helping the learner review and revise activities and, when necessary, goals.
- Is often a role model for the learner. The mentor can impart an understanding of life style and attitudes different from those the student might ordinarily meet.
- Is, above all, interested in the student as a learner and as an individual.

Why are mentors good people to work with gifted and talented students?

Mentors are particularly valuable to the development of the gifted and talented student because they provide models of competency, exploration, commitment to a field or discipline, and caring. Mentors can be found in all occupations and endeavors.

How can mentors be identified?

As a first step, those developing community based mentorship programs should conduct a critical assessment of both their program's goals and the resources of the community in which it will operate. Community agencies, e.g., governmental, educational, and service, are usually excellent places to start. These agencies often compile lists of individuals who act as resources in their particular occupational areas. Many of these people are delighted to serve as mentors to gifted and talented students who express similar interests. Labor, business, industrial, and professional groups can be approached as well as individual artists, doctors, lawyers, and craftsmen.

Are mentorship programs good for all gifted and talented students?

No. Mentorships are usually inappropriate for elementary school age students. Secondary students who are beginning to explore vocational and career interests or who have consuming hobbies are often good candidates for mentorship programs. Candidates should be sufficiently mature to be able to benefit from a one to one relationship with an adult, be able to take both guidance and criticism well, and should show evidence of ability in independent study situations.

What is required of those involved in mentorships?

The most important quality of mentorship is a shared understanding of the tasks, responsibilities, and functions to be performed by both the mentor and student. This requirement is best met through a careful matching of student and mentor by the program coordinator, director, or liaison person.

What is the role of the director of the program?

The most effective director or intermediary is one familiar with the community, its institutions, and its human resources. The intermediary should conduct interviews to ascertain students' goals and interests and to help students clearly define their objectives in becoming involved with a mentor. The intermediary will also interview prospective mentors, assessing not only their ability to relate to young people but also their goals for the mentorship, to narrow the range of possible placements. The major purpose of both sets of interviews is to clarify expectations. The intermediary will then combine objective data, such as learner interests and abilities, schedule and transportation problems, and mentor skills and

resources, with subjective factors, such as personality traits. Placement can then be proposed.

How do I start a mentorship program for gifted and talented students?

There is no ideal formula. To a large extent, the nature of the community and the resources within it will determine how a given program will be developed. However diverse, all mentorship programs should provide opportunities for gifted and talented students to:

- Pursue their interest at an appropriate level of difficulty.
- Explore career options through the real world of work experiences.
- Determine which of many talents and abilities holds the most promise for developing a career or life interest.
- Interact with other highly talented peers and adults.

To gather support for these goals, you may want to speak to community groups, parents, school personnel, and likely sources for mentors. Inform them that mentorship services need not be secured through a programmatic approach but can be established on an individual basis. When gathering support, it is important to remember that:

- A mentorship program can help bring the school and the community together.
- Student work habits will be developed and strengthened.
- The innovative nature of the program can be used to generate educator interest.
- The program is not unstructured rather it seeks to restructure the educational context.
- The program will be carefully evaluated.

What features of community based mentorship programs make them attractive?

- Gifted and talented students often need a latitude and depth of involvement that is not always available within the framework of the normal classroom.
- Gifted and talented students need settings where their curiosity can thrive among adults who can respond to it wholeheartedly.
- Gifted and talented students need to test the limits of their understanding, skills, and expression in the real world and to have the opportunity to create, examine, and test the products of their special vision with adults who can challenge them.
- Gifted and talented students of ethnic and racial minorities and lower socioeconomic environments often go unrecognized because the schools to which they are assigned lack appropriate resources.

How do I evaluate a community based mentorship program?

Like all educational programs, community based mentorship programs should be evaluated for their effectiveness and for the sake of improving them. Planning for evaluation of the program should begin at the same time as planning for the program itself. Evaluation as an afterthought is usually too little and too late and seldom provides the opportunity to make timely adjustment during the course of a program's life. If you are unfamiliar with how to approach an evaluation, the basic resources by Worthen and Saunders (1972) or Renzulli (1975) provide a survey of basic evaluation principles.

RESOURCES

For more information on community based mentorship programs write to your state education agency's consultant for gifted and talented programs or to:

The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

Readings in the area which may be helpful are:

Boston, Bruce. *The sorcerer's apprentice: A course study in the role of the mentor.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1976.

Campbell, F. P., Dunette, M. D., Lawler, E. E., & Weick, K. E. *Managerial behavior, performance and effectiveness.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1970.

National Commission on Resources For Youth. *In-service training manual for developing community based mentorships for gifted and talented.* Unpublished manuscript, 1977.

Renzulli, Joseph. *A guidebook for evaluating programs for the gifted and talented.* Ventura, CA: Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools, 1975.

Worthen, B., & Saunders, J. *Educational evaluation: Theory and practice.* Worthington, OH: Charles A. Jones, 1972.

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